



BRANWOOD  
PREPARATORY  
SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Version	2 (Version 1 July 2014)				
Policy reviewed on	November 2015				
Policy Written by	Mrs Follett (Headmistress)				
Policy seen by Governor on  (date / signature)					
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**This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.**



# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## 1.0 Aims

1.1 This School is an open community and aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases; we put the interests of the child above all issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be discussed, and then resolved.

1.2 If parents do have a complaint it should therefore be dealt with in accordance with this procedure. All complaints will be handled sensitively and as quickly as possible.

1.3 This procedure also extends to handling complaints from the public. Any reference to parents in this procedure includes the public.

1.4 This policy adheres to the principles of Helping Children Achieve More and complies with the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

## 2.0 What constitutes a complaint?

2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with or concern about a real or perceived problem.

2.2 A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the school has, for example,

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Acted unfairly.

2.3 A complaint may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department, about an individual member of staff, about a specific incident or about the Headmistress.

2.4 All complaints will be handled seriously as an unresolved problem may become a festering dispute or a confrontation. Our procedure aims to handle both formal complaints and the informal raising of concerns.

### **3.0 Complaints Log**

3.1 All complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Log and, where referable to a pupil, also on the pupil's file. The Log shall contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Brief statement of issue
- Location of detailed file(s)
- Staff member handling the issue
- Brief statement of outcome

3.2 The Complaints Log is entirely distinct from other files dealing with the complaint which may contain confidential information.

### **4.0 Stage 1 - Informal Complaint Procedure**

4.1 Unless the matter is especially pressing or is likely to be of significant concern to the parent, the pupil and/or the school, parents are requested to initially adopt the informal complaints procedure which is designed to bring about a swift resolution to the complaint. It is hoped that the majority of all complaints can be handled in this way.

1. Parents should approach their class teacher with their concerns either verbally or in writing followed by a meeting.
2. If this does not provide satisfaction or if the complaint is about the class teacher, parents should approach the Headmistress with their complaint. Such complaints will be immediately referred to the class teacher unless the Headmistress decides to deal with it.
3. If the complaint is about treatment to or by a pupil the Head of Pastoral Care and/or the Child Protection Officer shall be informed.
4. The class teacher or Headmistress will record the nature and date of the complaint in the Complaints Log and, where referable to a pupil, on the pupil's file.
5. If the complaint can be dealt with immediately to the parent's satisfaction the Complaint Log and pupil's file will simply be noted with the outcome of the complaint.
6. If the complaint cannot be immediately resolved or requires investigation the class teacher or Headmistress will send a letter to the parent acknowledging receipt of the complaint, giving particulars of it and providing a timeframe within which it is hoped the complaint can be resolved.
7. It is hoped that each complaint can be dealt with within [5] working days.
8. In most cases the person dealing with the complaint will discuss the complaint with the parent in an attempt to resolve the issue.

9. Once the complaint has been dealt with, the person dealing with the complaint shall record the outcome of the complaint in the Complaints Log and the pupil's file.

## **5.0 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint Procedure**

5.1 If the informal procedure fails to produce an outcome that satisfies the parents and/or the parents wish to disregard the informal procedure the parents can proceed to the formal complaints procedure.

1. The parents must put their complaint in writing and send it addressed to the Headmistress who will enter the date and nature of the complaint in the Complaints Log and, where referable to a pupil, on the pupil's file. The Headmistress shall also send a letter to the parent acknowledging receipt of the complaint, giving particulars of it and providing a timeframe within which it is hoped the complaint can be resolved.
2. If necessary the Headmistress shall inform the Child Protection Officer and/or the School Chairman.
3. It is hoped that the Headmistress will discuss the complaint with the parent within [5] working days to see if an immediate resolution can be found. Formal notes will be kept of any discussions.
4. If necessary the Headmistress will then commence investigations into the complaint which will be concluded within [10] working days.
5. If the complaint is about the Headmistress the parent should complain immediately to the School Chairman who will adopt the procedure noted above.
6. Once investigations have been completed the Headmistress or School Chairman will inform the parents of her decision together with her reasons and record her decision in the Complaints Log and pupil's file. She will also inform the parents of their right to appeal to the Complaints Panel. If the parents are still not satisfied they can proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

## **6.0 Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

6.1 This stage can only be invoked by the parents if they have exhausted the formal procedure stage either with or without starting with the informal stage.

6.2 The Governing Body shall establish a Complaints Panel which shall be chaired by a Governor (the "Chair") who is not the School Chairman. If the Chair is not satisfied that the formal procedure stage has been undertaken he can decide in his discretion to refuse to accept the complaint and refer it back to the Headmistress unless the complaint is about the Headmistress.

6.3 If the Chair agrees to deal with the complaint the following procedure shall apply:

1. The Complaint Panel will consist of not less than 3 Governors, none of whom are directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one of whom is totally independent of the management and running of the school. If governors are directly involved then Trustees will make up the panel.

2. The Panel will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and ask if the parent wishes to provide any further information or documents about the complaint. Alternatively the Panel may ask for further information or documents. The Panel will also ask the parent if there are any dates when the parent will be unable to attend a Panel Hearing to present the complaint.
3. On receiving the parent's response the Panel shall set a hearing date which shall take place within [15] working days or as soon as possible thereafter. The parent shall receive at least [3] working days' notice of the hearing.
4. Copies of all documents shall be provided by the Panel to the parent not less than [3] working days before the Hearing.
5. The parent is entitled to attend the Hearing and be accompanied although not by legal representation.
6. After hearing the complaint and asking any questions it deems necessary the Panel shall retire to consider its decision. Where possible it is hoped that an immediate decision can be reached although it is possible the Panel may need to undertake further investigations before a decision can be reached. A decision will be reached within five working days at the most.
7. Any decision reached by the Panel shall be confirmed in writing to the parent, the Chair of Governors and the Headmistress and, if appropriate, the person complained about. Reasons for the decision together with any recommendations shall also be provided.
8. The Panel shall ensure that the Complaints Log and, where referable to a pupil, the pupil's file is noted.
9. The Panel's decision shall be final.

## **7.0 Making a Complaint to OFSTED**

7.1 If a parent or carer does not feel that the investigation satisfactorily answered their complaint they can submit a complaint to OFSTED.

7.2 Any complaints received will be kept in a Complaints Record file kept on the school premises and will be reviewed annually by the Headmistress and Governing Board.

## **8.0 Confidentiality**

8.1 The school shall ensure that all complaints whether informal or formal are treated sensitively and confidentially saved where information must be provided to an Inspector or by virtue of any legal obligation.

8.2 In keeping with the school's aim of openness and fairness it is the school's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children and similarly that complaints raised by pupils should not rebound adversely on them or on other pupils.

## **9.0 Anonymous Complaints**

9.1 Anonymous complaints may be where there is no indication of either name or address, or where the complainants say that they do not wish to be identified. They may come from members of the public or parents.

9.2 Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils may be dealt with on a general basis, with reminders about the school's expectations.

9.3 Parents and members of the public should be encouraged to give their names and should be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Headmistress's discretion as to what action if any should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint. Anonymous complaints will be recorded onto the Complaints Log. Anonymous complaints about child abuse will be dealt with under the school's Child Protection Policy.

## **10.0 Evaluation of the Complaints Procedure**

10.1 It is important the School learns from any complaints whether justified or not to try to prevent any repetition. The Governors shall monitor the complaints procedure in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headmistress shall be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of this procedure including adherence with the various timeframes and whether parents are content with this procedure.

## **11.0 Inspection**

11.1 A copy of this procedure is available on request at any time to parents of pupils at the school, prospective pupils and members of the public.

## **12.0 Disability Equality Impact Assessment**

12.1 This policy has been written with reference to and in consideration of the Disability Equality Scheme. Assessment will include consideration of issues identified by the involvement of disabled children, staff and parents and any information the school holds on disabled children, staff and parents.

## **13.0 Links to other policies**

13.1 The Complaints should be read in conjunction with other policies depending upon the reason for referring to policies.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Changes made</b>
2	January 2015	Mrs Follett	Change to the lay out of the policy.

